

The Morning Astorian.

VOL. LVI.

SUPPLEMENT--TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1903.

NO. 291.

PRESIDENT ADDRESSES UNIONS

Chief Executive Urges His Hearers to Strive for Purer and Higher Citizenship.

Syracuse, Sept. 7.—President Roosevelt was today accorded a magnificent reception by the citizens of his own state. From the moment of his arrival this morning at 9:30 o'clock until he stepped aboard his special train at 12:30 tonight to begin his return trip to Oyster Bay he was accorded a continuous ovation. Fully 100,000 persons came from all sections of New York state, and many additional thousands came from the country contiguous to this city. Everywhere in the city he was received with notable enthusiasm. As he drove through the streets tens of thousands of persons banked along the sidewalks greeted him with cheers. Business houses and residences were ablaze with bunting and American flags floated in the breeze from almost every window.

In the morning soon after his arrival, he viewed from a beautifully decorated stand in Hanover Square the great parade of the labor organizations of the city. He then went to the state fair grounds, where he delivered an address before 50,000 people. The president spoke as follows:

In speaking on Labor Day at the annual fair of the New York State Agricultural Association, it is natural to keep especially in mind the two bodies who compose the majority of our people and upon whose welfare depends the welfare of the entire state. If circumstances are such that thrift, industry and forethought enable the farmer, the tiller of the soil, on the one hand, and the wage worker on the other, to keep themselves, their wives, and their children in reasonable comfort then the State is well off, and we can be assured that the other classes in the community will likewise prosper. On the other hand if there is in the long run a lack of prosperity among the two classes named, then all other prosperity is sure to be more seeming than real. It has been our profound good fortune as a nation that hitherto, disregarding exceptional periods of depression and the normal and inevitable fluctuations, there has been on the whole from the beginning of our Government to the present day a progressive betterment alike in the condition of the tiller of the soil and in the condition of the man who, by his manual skill and labor, supports himself and his family, and endeavors to bring up his children so that they may be at least as well off as, and if possible better off than, he himself has been. There are, of course, exceptions, but as a whole the standard of living among the farmers of our country has risen from generation to generation, and the wealth represented on the farms has steadily increased, while the wages of labor has likewise risen, both as regards the actual money paid and as regards the purchasing power which that money represents.

Side by side with this increase in the prosperity of the wage worker and the tiller of the soil has gone on a great increase in the prosperity among the business men and among certain classes of professional men; and the prosperity of these men has been partly the cause and partly the consequence of the prosperity of farmer and wage worker. It can not be too often repeated that in this country, in the long run, we all of us tend to go up or down together. If the average of well being is high, it means that the average wage-worker, the average farmer, and the average business man are all alike well off. If the average shrinks there is not one of these classes which will not feel the shrinkage. Of course there are always some men who are not affected by good times, just as there are some men who are not affected by bad times. But speaking broadly, it is true that if prosperity comes all of us tend to share more or less therein, and that if adversity comes each of us, to a greater or less extent, feels the tension. Unfortunately, in this world the innocent frequently find themselves obliged to pay some of the penalty for the misdeeds of the guilty; and so if hard times came, whether they be due to our own fault or to our misfortune, whether they be due to some burst of

speculative frenzy that has caused a portion of the business world to lose its head—a loss which no legislation can possibly supply—or whether they be due to any lack of wisdom in a portion of the world of labor—in each case the trouble once started is felt more or less in every walk of life.

It is all-essential to the continuance of our healthy national life that we should recognize this community of interest among our people. The welfare of each of us is dependent fundamentally upon the welfare of all of us, and therefore in public life that man is the best representative of each of us who seeks to do good to each by doing good to all; in other words, whose endeavor it is, not to represent any special class and promote merely that class's selfish interests, but to represent all true and honest men of all sections and all classes and to work for their interests by working for our common country.

We can keep our government on a sane and healthy basis, we can make and keep our social system what it should be, only on condition of judging each man, not as a member of a class, but on his worth as a man. It is an infamous thing in our American life, and fundamentally treacherous to our institutions, to apply to any man any test save that of his personal worth, or to draw between two sets of men any distinction save the distinction of conduct, the distinction that marks off those who do well and wisely from those who do ill and foolishly. There are good citizens and bad citizens in every class as in every locality, and the attitude of decent people toward great public and social questions should be determined, not by the accidental questions of employment or locality, but by those deep-set principles which represent the innermost souls of men.

The failure in public and in private life thus to treat each man on his own merits, the recognition of this government as being either for the poor as such or for the rich as such, would prove fatal to our Republic as such failure and such recognition have always proved fatal in the past to other republics. A healthy republican government must rest upon individuals, not upon classes or sections. As soon as it becomes government by a class or by a section it departs from the old American ideal.

It is, of course, the merest truism to say that free institutions are of avail only to people who possess the high and peculiar characteristics needed to take advantage of such institutions. The century that has just closed has witnessed many and lamentable instances in which people have seized a government free in form, or have had it bestowed upon them, and yet have permitted it under the forms of liberty to become some species of despotism or anarchy, because they did not have in them the power to make this seeming liberty one of deed instead of one merely of word. Under such circumstances the seeming liberty may be supplanted by a tyranny or despotism in the first place, or it may reach the road of despotism by the path of license and anarchy. It matters but little which road is taken. In either case the same goal is reached. People show themselves just as unfit for liberty whether they submit to anarchy or to tyranny; and class government, whether it be the government of a plutocracy or the government of a mob, is equally incompatible with the principles established in the days of Washington and perpetuated in the days of Lincoln.

Many qualities are needed by a people which would preserve the power of self-government in fact as well as in name. Among these qualities are forethought, shrewdness, self-restraint, the courage which refuses to abandon one's own rights, and the disinterested and kindly good sense which enables one to do justice to the rights of others. Lack of strength and lack of courage unfit men for self-government on the one hand; and on the other, brutal arrogance, envy, in short, any manifestation

of the spirit of selfish disregard, whether of one's own duties or of the rights of others, are equally fatal.

In the history of mankind many republics have risen, have flourished for a less or greater time, and then have fallen because their citizens lost the power of governing themselves and thereby of governing their state; and in no way has this loss of power been so often and so clearly shown as in the tendency to turn the government into a government primarily for the benefit of one class instead of a government for the benefit of the people as a whole.

Again and again in the republics of ancient Greece, in those of mediæval Italy and mediæval Flanders, this tendency was shown, and wherever the tendency became a habit and invariably inevitably proved fatal to the State. In the final result it mattered not one whit whether the movement was in favor of one class or of another. The outcome was equally fatal, whether the country fell into the hands of a wealthy oligarchy which exploited the poor or whether it fell under the domination of a turbulent mob which plundered the rich. In both cases there resulted violent alternations between tyranny and disorder and final complete loss of liberty to all citizens—destruction in the end overtaking the class which had for the moment been victorious as well as that which had momentarily been defeated. The death knell of the republic had rung as soon as the active power became lodged in the hands of those who sought not to do justice to all citizens rich and poor alike, but to stand for one special class and for its interests as opposed to the interests of others.

The reason why our future is assured lies in the fact that our people are genuinely skilled in and fitted for self-government and therefore will spurn the leadership of those who seek to excite this ferocious and foolish class antagonism. The average American knows not only that he himself intends to do about what is right, but that his average fellow-countryman has the same intention and the same power to make his intention effective. He knows, whether he be business man, professional man, farmer, mechanic, employer, or wage-worker, that the welfare of each these men is bound up with the welfare of all the others; that each is neighbor to the other, is actuated by the same hopes and fears, has fundamentally the same ideals, and that all alike have much the same virtues and the same faults. Our average fellow-citizen is a sane and healthy man, who believes in decency and has a wholesome mind. He therefore feels an equal scorn alike for the man of wealth guilty of the men and base spirit of arrogance toward those who are less well off, and for the man of small means who in his turn either feels, or seeks to excite in others the feeling of mean and base envy for those who are better off. The two feelings, envy and arrogance, are but opposite sides of the same shield, but different developments of the same spirit. Fundamentally, the unscrupulous rich man who seeks to exploit and oppress those who are less well off is in spirit not opposed to, but identical with, the unscrupulous poor man who desires to plunder and oppress those who are better off. The courtier and the demagogue are but developments of the same type under different conditions, each manifesting the same servile spirit the same desire to rise by pandering to base passions; though one panders to power in the shape of a single man and the other to power in the shape of a multitude. So likewise the man who wishes to rise by wronging others must by right be contrasted, not with the man who likewise wishes to do wrong, though to a different set of people but with the man who wishes to do justice to all people and to wrong none.

The line of cleavage between good and bad citizenship lies, not between the man of wealth who acts squarely by his fellows and the man who seeks each day's wage by that day's work, wronging no one and doing his duty by his neighbor; nor yet does this line of cleavage divide the unscrupulous wealthy man who exploits others in his own interest, from the demagogue, or from the sullen and envious being who wishes to attack all men of property, whether they do well or ill. On the contrary, the line of cleavage between good citizenship separates the rich man who does well from the rich man who does ill, the poor man of good conduct from the poor man of bad conduct. This line of cleavage lies at right angles to any

such arbitrary line of division as that separating one class from another, one locality from another, or men with a certain degree of property from those of a less degree of property.

The good citizen is the man who, whatever his wealth or his poverty, strives manfully to do his duty to himself, to his family, to his neighbor, to the state; who is incapable of the baseness which manifests itself either in arrogance or in envy, but who while demanding justice for himself is no less scrupulous to do justice to others. It is because the average American citizen, rich or poor, is of just this type that we have cause for our profound faith in the future of the Republic.

Ours is a government of liberty, by, through, and under the law. Lawlessness and connivance at law breaking—whether the law-breaking take the form of a crime of greed and cunning or of a crime of violence—are destructive not only of order, but of the true liberties which can only come through order. If alive to their true interests rich and poor alike will set their faces like flint against the spirit which seeks personal advantage by overriding the laws, without regard to whether this spirit shows itself in the form of bodily violence by one set of men or in the form of vulpine cunning by another set of men.

Let the watchwords of all our people be the old familiar watchwords of honesty, decency, fair-dealing and common sense. The qualities denoted by these words are essential to all of us, as we deal with the complex industrial problems of today, the problems affecting not merely the accumulation but even more the wise distribution of wealth. We ask no man's permission when we require him to obey the law; neither the permission of the poor man nor yet of the rich man. Least of all can the man of great wealth afford to break the law, even for his own financial advantage; for the law is his prop and support, and it is both foolish and profoundly unpatriotic in him to fail in giving hearty support to those who show that there is in very fact one law, and one law only, alike for the rich and the poor, for the great and the small.

Men sincerely interested in the due protection of property, and men sincerely interested in seeing that the just rights of labor are guaranteed, should alike remember not only that in the long run neither the capitalist nor the wage worker can be helped in healthy fashion save by helping the other; but also that to require either side to obey the law and do its full duty toward the community is emphatically to that side's real interest.

There is no worse enemy of the wage-worker than the man who condones mob violence in any shape or who preaches class hatred; and surely the slightest acquaintance with our industrial history should teach even the most short-sighted that the times of most suffering for our people as a whole, the times when business is stagnant, and capital suffers from shrinkage and gets no return from its investments, are exactly the times of hardship, and want, and grim disaster among the poor. If all the existing instrumentalities of wealth could be abolished, the first and severest suffering would come among those of us who are least well off at present. The wage-worker is well off only when the rest of the country is well off; and he can best contribute to this general well-being by showing sanity and a firm purpose to do justice to others.

In his turn the capitalist who is really a conservative, the man who has fore thought as well as patriotism, should heartily welcome every effort, legislative or otherwise, which has for its object to secure fair dealing by capital, corporate or individual, toward the public and toward the employee. Such laws as the franchise-tax law in this state, which the court of appeals recently unanimously decided constitutional—a law as that passed in congress last year for the purpose of establishing a department of commerce and labor, under which there should be a bureau to oversee and secure publicity from the great corporations which do an interstate business—such a law as that passed at the time for the regulation of the great highways of commerce so as to keep these roads clear on fair terms to all producers in getting their goods to market—these laws are in the interests not merely of the people as a whole, but of the propertied classes. For in no way is the stability of property better assured than by making it patent to our people that property bears its proper share of the burdens of the state;